

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on February 6, 2006.

Claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 22, 23, 26, and 28 are amended, claim 18 is canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1-3, 5-10, 13-16, 19-24, and 26-28 are now pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 19, 21-24 and 26-28 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Terauchi* (U.S. Patent 5,862,147). Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 7, 19, 23, and 26 to include limitations relating to a bit in a status register within the FLASH memory device. A bit in the status register is set to indicate to a device external to the FLASH memory device that a specified block is blank. Applicant respectfully submits that the bit in the status register within the FLASH memory device, and the interactions therewith, are not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the *Terauchi* reference. Please see the section below entitled "Interview Summary."

Dependent claims 22 and 28 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully submits that the dependent claims 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 21, 22, 24, 27, and 28 define over the references of record at least by virtue of dependency.

Claims 13, 15-16 and 18 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Shokouhi* (U.S. Patent 6,651,199). Applicant has amended independent claim 13 to include limitations relating to a bit in a status register within the FLASH memory device. A bit in the status register is set to indicate to a device external to the FLASH memory device that a specified block is blank. Applicant respectfully submits that the bit in the status register within the FLASH memory device, and the interactions therewith, are not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the *Shokouhi* reference. Please see the section below entitled "Interview Summary."

Dependent claim 18 has been canceled. Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 15 and 16 define over the references of record at least by virtue of dependency.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 2, 10, 14 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Terauchi* (U.S. 5,862,147) in view of *Salzman* (U.S. 5,438,536). This rejection relies on the anticipation of the independent claims upon which claims 2, 10, 14, and 20 depend. As described above, applicant believes that the rejection of the independent claims has been overcome by amendment and remarks. Accordingly, applicant also believes that this rejection has been overcome by the same amendments and remarks.

Interview Summary

Applicant's representative Dana LeMoine conducted a telephone interview with Examiner Hetul B. Patel on April 25, 2006. Applicant's representative records the interview as follows:

- (A) No exhibits were shown, nor any demonstration conducted.
- (B) The independent claims were discussed.
- (C) The cited references were discussed.
- (D) Applicant's representative proposed to amend the independent claims to make clear that the status register is within the FLASH memory device.
- (E) Applicants' representative presented the argument that the references of record do not disclose, teach, or suggest a FLASH memory device having a status register with a bit to indicate that a specified block of memory is blank.
- (F) The Office Action mailed 2/6/06 was discussed.
- (G) Applicant's representative and Examiner Patel agreed that the cited references do not disclose a status register within a FLASH memory device, where the status register includes a bit to indicate that a specified block is blank. Examiner Patel agreed to perform a further search if deemed necessary.



AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE UNDER 37 CFR § 1.111
Serial Number: 10/602,320
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Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (952-473-8800) to facilitate prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER T. LARSEN

By his Representatives,

Customer Number: 45445
Telephone Number: 952-473-8800

Date 5-1-06

By Dana B LeMoine
Dana B. LeMoine
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 1 day of 2006.

Shellie Bailey

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Signature